

The Storm by toleratekate

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Summary: Peyton Morgan is a normal freshman, trying to survive the first day of high school with her sanity. She's prepared for the books and the gossip and even the boys, but what she isn't prepared for is the weather. Join the party as they attempt to stay safe during one of the worst storms the world has ever seen.

1. Chapter one: The Calm Before the Storm

As Peyton stepped out onto the front porch, she noticed something off about the sky. The normal bright blue and happy sky was now a swampy yellow color. Her heart began to sink; she absolutely hated storms. And on the first day of freshman year? She was devastated.

"Don't worry, Peyt." Peyton's eyes shot over, and suddenly she was looking into a mirror. Her twin sister, Alex, always insisted on dressing similar. *What if we need to switch places for the day?* She would say. Today the girls long, dark hair was in its naturally messy and curly state. While Alex was wearing a pair of light blue overall shorts and a white tee shirt, Peyton was in an overall dress and a light grey tee shirt. Both wore their favorite white sneakers, though it was seldom that they didn't.

"Do we have to be the exact same person every single year?" Peyton asked, raising a brow at her sister.

"Don't blame me, mom's the one who does all the shopping."

"Right, like you don't *insist* on looking the same," Peyton rolled her eyes. In this distance a car horn blew. Alex let out a sigh.

"Spence is in a mood," she muttered, referring to their elder sister.

"Wonderful," Peyton let out a huff before heading to the car.

"I'm not going to be late for school every single day this year while you two bicker about who's wearing what," Spencer snapped as soon as Peyton opened the door.

"It's the first day," Alex whined.

"And we're not even late," Peyton chimed in.

"I'm forewarning you. This is not going to be a repeat of last year, okay? You two need to just get your shit together now."

"Alright, fine," Alex sighed, cracking her window from the passenger seat. Peyton didn't bother to respond. Spencer had already started the

radio, and there was no point in arguing with her.

Peyton often thought Spencer was the older, prettier version of her sister and herself. Her dark hair was not kinky curly, but loosely wavy. Her eyes weren't hazel, but brown. Her face didn't have a splash of freckles across her nose, either. Just perfect, unblemished skin.

When they arrived at school, the sky was no longer swampy yellow, but it had turned almost green. Peyton held her breath as she climbed out of the car, determined not to have a panic attack. She reached into her backpack, her fingers clumsily searching for her inhaler. After a few moments with no such luck, she was on the verge of hyperventilating.

"Peyton," Spencer eyed her carefully, "everything okay?"

"I forgot my inhaler," Peyton replied, her teeth brushing over her bottom lip. "I forgot my inhaler, and it looks like it's going to storm. What if it thunders?"

Alex took her sisters hand in hers, "If you feel like you're going to have an *episode*, just go to the nurse. They should have some on hand, right Spencer?"

"Right," Spencer agreed, stepping into the school. "Look, if it starts to storm I'll come find you, okay Peyt?"

Peyton nodded her head, following her sister into the school. Almost like clock work, the bell rang.

"Alright, good luck guys," Spencer smiled softly. She then turned toward her locker and was out of sight.

Peyton turned to face her sister, eyeing her carefully. "We've never not had the same schedule before," she murmured, almost pitifully.

"I know I'm always trying to dress like you, but you are *so* more codependent than I am," Alex grinned at her sister. "It'll be fine. I'll meet you for lunch, okay?"

"Deal," Peyton agreed. She turned toward the gym. "I'll see you then."

"Love you, later," Alex grinned.

"Love you, later."

"Listen, just talk to her," Lucas huffed. "You've been pining about it for way too long, and frankly we're tired of hearing about it."

"But *look* at her. She isn't going to speak to me."

"Actually, that's Peyton. The nicer twin," Max nodded her head encouragingly. "Now if you were crushing on Alex? It would be a different story."

"I am *not* crushing," Mike glared. "I am simply interested in being her friend."

"Right," Lucas snickered. "Friends."

"Well, if that's the case," Max raised a brow before turning toward the bleachers. "Hey, Peyton!"

"What the hell!" Mike whispered.

Peyton brought her eyes up and over to them, a confused look on her face. She hesitated, but closed the book she was reading and headed toward the party.

"What's up?" She asked, casually.

"We were thinking about starting a game, are you interested? Two on two. Mike needs a partner."

"Thank you, but I really really suck at basketball," she admitted, her cheeks starting to turn rosy.

"We just didn't want him to feel like a third wheel," Max explained. "We don't have to play basketball. Any game will due."

Peyton shifted her weight awkwardly. "I'm trying not to over do it today. I forgot my inhaler at home."

"Well, perfect. Mike will keep you company," Max batted an eye.

"Okay, sure," Peyton nodded, her eyes brushing over Mike. She motioned toward the bleachers, and Mike didn't hesitate to follow her.

"Alright, I've preassigned your lab partners, class." Mr. Clarke flashed the class a smile. "Dustin, you and Erica," he began, but Alex tuned him out. He went through several names before finally, "And Miss Alexis Morgan with Will Byers."

Alex's eyes shot up and over to Will Byers, AKA zombie boy. He was already collecting his things and heading over to her lab table, a shy smile on his face; it was obviously fake.

"I'm not very good at science," Alex mumbled upon his arrival.

"That's okay," Will shrugged, his smile attempting to fade. "I am."

"Right," she nodded, "You and your friends are like, wicked smart or something."

"We like to learn," he admitted shyly.

Alex nodded her head, unsure of how to respond when Mr. Clarke cleared his throat. "Today we will be taking the time to learn a little about our new partners. There's a worksheet on your desk. Talk amongst yourselves. Learn."

Alex brought her eyes over to Will, who was looking down at the worksheet.

"Your name is Alexis," Will mumbled. "But you prefer Alex, right?"

She nodded her head, "And your name is William, but you prefer Will."

"Right," he glanced up for a moment, giving her a small smile. "Where are you from? You transferred here a few years ago, right?"

"I'm from Nashville, Tennessee," Alex replied. "And you're from here?"

Will nodded. "I'm assuming you're fifteen?" Alex asked. He nodded again. "So am I. What are you most afraid of?" Alex looked up at him, instantly regretting the question. He looked like a deer caught in headlights. "I'm sorry, it's just in the questions. I know you had a rough year last year."

Will shook his head, "No, it's okay. I'm afraid of spiders."

Alex let out a giggle, "Bullshit, but I'll write it down."

"What are you afraid of?" he raised a brow at her.

"The dark," Alex replied with a shrug of her shoulders. "Clowns, worms, heights. Pick one."

"You don't seem like the type of person who's afraid of anything."

"And you seem like the type of person who's afraid of everything," she frowned. "People can surprise you."

Sitting on the bleachers, Peyton looked over at Mike awkwardly. "So, you're in AP History next period?"

"Mmhmm," he nodded his head casually.

"Me, too," she replied. There was an awkward silence for a few moments before she let out a giggle.

"What?" he asked, looking up at her.

"Nothing, this is just so awkward," she replied, shrugging her shoulders. "I'm so bad at small talk."

"Apparently I am, too. Don't feel bad," he flashed her a smile. Before she could respond there was a horrible crack of thunder followed by a crashing sound. Suddenly the power was out, and Peyton's entire body froze.

"Woah, what's going on?" Mike stood up. "Something is wrong." Peyton attempted to speak, but her words got tangled in her throat. She felt as if she was choking on her tongue. "Are you okay?" he sat

back down, this time right beside her. His hand was on her shoulder. Another crack of thunder. Her breathing heavied until there was no breathing at all. She tried to stand, but tumbled down the bleachers instead. Coughing, gagging, fighting for air, but there was none.

2. Chapter two: The Rain

She was laying there, and even in the dark Mike could see the crimson blood dripping from her head. The fall from the bleachers must have taken a toll on her, and she was already choking. He felt absolutely helpless. He sat down on the ground next to her, nearly in tears himself. "I don't know what to do! Where is Coach Stanson?"

There was a crowd of people surrounding him. Peyton took in a long, deep gasp and a sense of relief flooded over him; at least she was breathing a little.

"I have no idea," Lucas replied. "He's been gone for like thirty minutes."

"We need the nurse," Max cried. She took off out of the gym, skateboard in hand.

"Does anybody have an inhaler?" Lucas called, desperately searching the crowd of people, but to no avail.

Peyton was trying to sit up, short sharp gasps interrupting her. Mike took her by the shoulders and helped steady her. "What can I do?" He asked, hopelessly. Peyton threw her face at him, crushing her lips against his. For a moment, he felt like maybe he was the one who couldn't breathe.

The kiss lasted maybe four seconds, but when she pulled away she pressed her forehead against his, taking small steady breaths to calm herself.

"I read somewhere," she mumbled, "that kissing stops panic attacks."

"Yeah," Mike let out a sigh. "Yeah, I think that is definitely the thing you should do when you're having one."

Peyton tried to laugh, but it came out as more of a cough. She pulled her head away from him. "I'm sorry for violating your personal space."

"Honestly, feel free," Mike assured her. "I would hate for you to, you

know, suffocate or something."

Lucas rolled his eyes. "Are you okay, Peyton?"

"I think so. My head really, really hurts."

"Can you stand up? That fall was pretty gnarly," Lucas said. Mike stood up, his hand held out for Peyton to take. She laced her fingers with his, slowly letting him haul her to her feet.

"I think I'm okay," she replied. She didn't let go of Mike's hand; her other hand clumsily found her forehead, blood soaking her fingertips. "Just knocked my head a little, I guess."

"We need to get her to the nurse," Lucas insisted. Without waiting for a response, he headed toward the gym door. "The lights are still off. I wonder what the crack was," he said, to no one in particular. Mike and Peyton headed toward him slowly. What they saw caused Peyton's breathing to heave. Mike's fingers tightened around hers.

The sky was no longer green, but black. The rain was pouring so rapidly, they couldn't see the First Building, much less the Second Building, which was where the nurse was located.

"I don't know if we should go out in that," Mike mumbled.

"Uh, Max literally just did. We can't leave her in that alone," Lucas retorted.

"My sister," Peyton locked eyes with Mike. "She's in first building."

"Jonathan is your only brother," Alex observed. "No one else?"

"Nope," Will replied. "Peyton and Spencer, they're your only siblings?"

"No, actually I have another sister, Jersey. She's two," Alex explained. Will started writing when the first crack of thunder violently shook the building; her lab chair softly began to sway. The lights flickered, and then shut off.

"That's weird," Mr. Clarke murmured. "Didn't know we were

expecting bad weather today. Alright, stay calm, settle down. I will go see what is going on."

As Mr. Clarke exited, Will turned toward Alex. "Are you okay?"

"Why wouldn't I be?" she asked, her fingers clenched into fists.

"The dark," Will replied. "It's pretty dark in here."

"I've been in the dark enough times to know that nothing is going to get me, no matter how scary it is," Alex replied. "I'm more worried about Peyton. She hates storms, and she doesn't have her inhaler." She stood up, collecting her books and stuffing them into her backpack.

"Where are you going?" he asked, confused.

"To find her," Alex explained. "Tell Mr. Clarke it was an emergency, okay?"

"Where is she right now?" Will asked.

"Gym," Alex replied.

"Great, that's where Mike and Lucas are. I'll come with you," he smiled, starting to collect his things. "I have an inhaler."

As they made their way toward the door, Dustin stood up. "Excuse me, Mr. Clarke told us to stay calm, where are you two going?"

"To find Peyton," Will explained. "She's with Mike and Lucas."

"The party sticks together," Dustin insisted. "I'm coming with."

"Fantastic," Alex rolled her eyes. "The entire dweeb party."

Max hurried through the hallways, attempting not to slip. The rain was pouring all the way inside, and she was absolutely drenched. She was shivering and shaking as she made her way through first building, nearly to the end of it when she heard Dustin's voice.

"Aren't you supposed to be with Lucas and Mike?"

"Dustin," she let out a sigh of relief. She turned and walked toward him, trying to make out the other figures walking with him. "It's horrible out there."

"Jesus, you're soaked."

"You're telling me," she shivered. Her eyes locked with Alex's and she let out another sigh of relief. "Alex! Do you have Peyton's inhaler?"

"No, she left it at home. Why? Is she okay?"

"She's having a panic attack. I'm on my way to the nurse."

"Where is she," Alex attempted to keep her voice calm, but even she couldn't hide the desperation, "Will has an inhaler. We need to get to her right now."

"She's in the gym. She fell down the bleachers. We need to hurry."

The rain against Peyton's skin was freezing. It was still August, she wasn't exactly sure how it was so cold. She was hurrying through the rain, Mike's finger's still locked around hers, when the lightning began. It was a beautiful display of light, bright enough to light the entirety of the darkness the sun had left in its absence. She jumped back in fear, a sharp gasp escaping her lips. Mike tightened his grip.

"We're almost there," he muttered, pulling her further along the sidewalk. "You can do this, I promise."

"Can I?" Peyton frowned, though she didn't stop moving. It wasn't too terribly long before they were inside the first building.

"Do you need to rest?" Mike asked, pulling his hand away from hers and pulling his jacket off. He wrapped it carefully around her shoulders. She nodded in response, sliding down onto the floor for a moment. He followed suit, sitting down beside her.

"I'm going to see if I can find Max, or at the very least a teacher or some sort of authority figure," Lucas mumbled, heading down the

dark hallway.

Mike brought his eyes over to Peyton, "Are you okay?"

"You keep asking me that as if I'm going to break," Peyton tried to smile. "I'm not that fragile, Mike."

"You literally just fell down the bleachers because of an asthma attack," he cocked a brow at her. "I have earned the right to worry."

"But you don't even know me," she replied, sinking her teeth into her top lip.

"I've known you my entire life, you're the one who didn't know me."